

Baseball pitched aboard space station finally “caught” by Space Center Houston

The International Space Station makes history again – this time, baseball history. The 2002 World Series in Anaheim, Calif. began with the fastest pitch ever: the ball broke all major league records and traveled at 17,500 miles per hour aboard the ISS.

Now this historic baseball, thrown by Expedition 5 NASA ISS Science Officer Dr. Peggy Whitson to Commander Valery Korzun, will have a permanent home at Space Center Houston. ISS Program Manager Bill Gerstenmaier joined Whitson on April 13 to present the all-star baseball “pitched” from space to the visitors’ center. They were also joined by members of the Bellaire Little League as well as Roger Bornstein, Director of Marketing at Space Center Houston, who accepted the ball on behalf of the visitors’ center.

The ceremony, which began with an autograph session by Whitson, included a replay of the very high-altitude pitch as it was recorded by Flight Engineer Sergei Treshev. The pitch was downlinked to the Mission Control Center and broadcast to fans at Anaheim’s Edison Field, as well as to millions of television viewers.

When the baseball, along with the Expedition 5 crewmembers, came back to Earth in December 2002, it was signed by Whitson and by World Series ballplayers. Fans of baseball and spaceflight alike can now enjoy seeing the ball at its new home in Space Center Houston. ❖



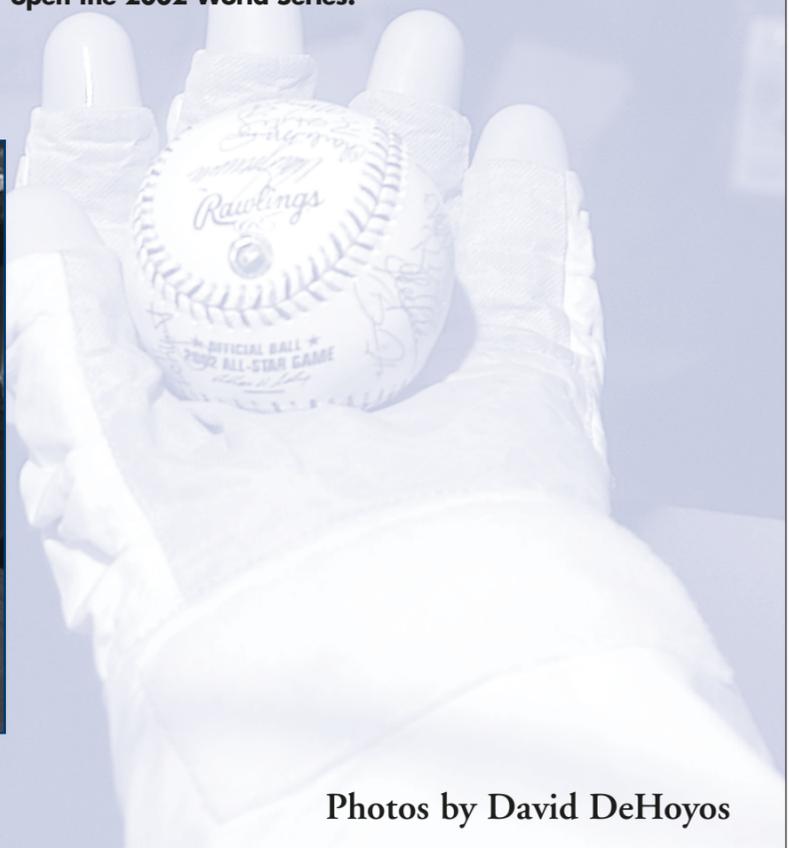
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Expedition 5 NASA ISS Science Officer Peggy Whitson presents to Space Center Houston the baseball that she threw to Expedition 5 Commander Valery Korzun to open the 2002 World Series.

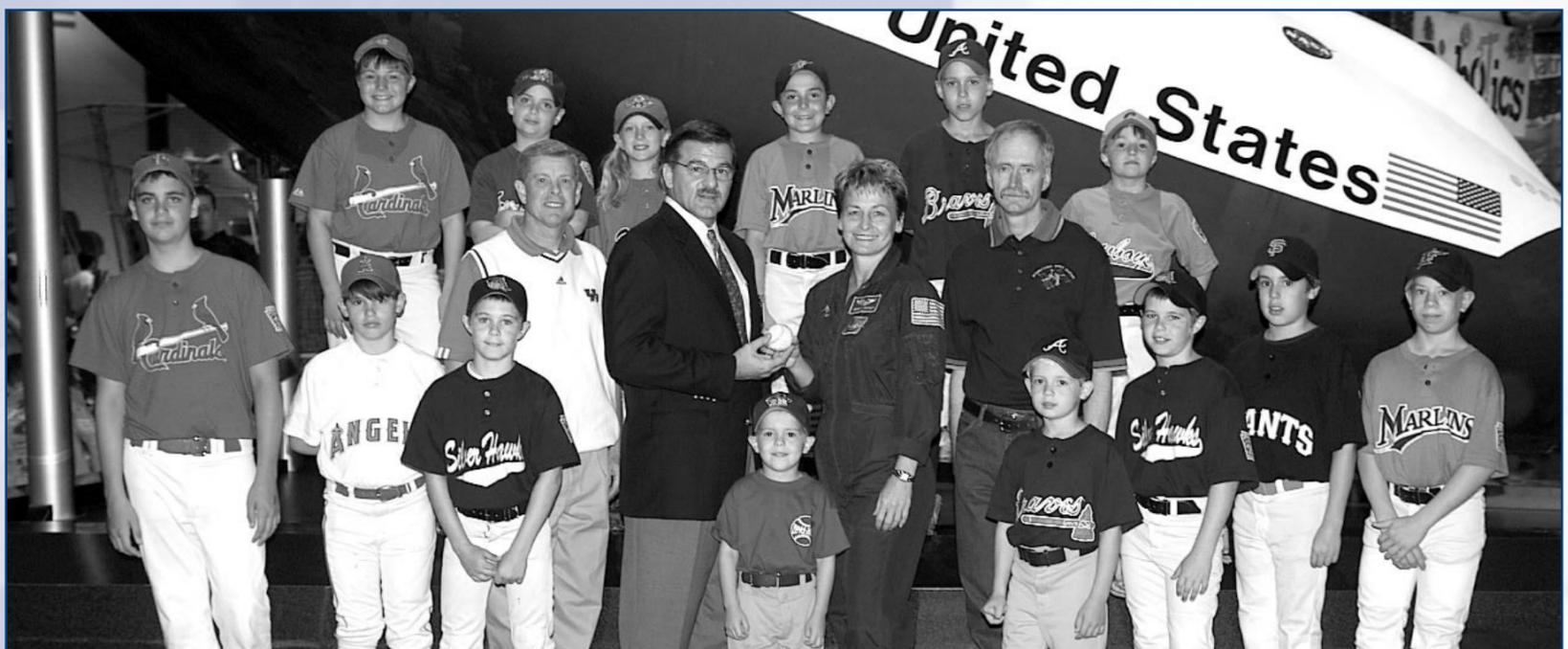


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Whitson signs an autograph for a young fan.



Photos by David DeHoyos



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Whitson is pictured with Rob Kelso, NASA Executive at the Houston Technology Center; Roger Bornstein, Director of Marketing at Space Center Houston; Bill Gerstenmaier, ISS Program Manager; and just a few of the young baseball players who witnessed the presentation of the historic baseball.